

Stocker Corridor Acquisition Complete, Linear Park Planned

The Baldwin Hills Conservancy (BHC) and California State Parks are proud to announce the long-awaited acquisition of all thirty-eight acres along the Stocker Corridor is complete. The consummation of a three-year negotiation for the last two parcels straddling Valley Ridge Blvd. has finally put to rest the threat of housing development on the much-coveted hillside property. California State Parks took title to the property at the close of 2004.

The \$3.5 million purchase of the entire one-mile stretch of land from the lower end of the hill at Presidio to the crest at Overhill Drive would not have been possible without years of community vigilance orchestrated by United Homeowners Association's (UHA) leadership and the support of state and county officials. Plans for the Stocker Corridor Trail and Bikeway

"Acquisition of the entire one-mile park corridor would not have been possible without the years of community support."

— Tony Nicholas, UHA

include a mile-long linear park design that will provide walkers, joggers and cyclists non-vehicular access to the eastern ridgeline of Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area. The conceptual design has been solidified through a series of community meetings as well as a steering committee formed to advise

the architects and designers on suitable amenities for the area. The BHC cosponsored the planning effort with California State Parks Foundation and recently presented the final draft of the plan to California State Parks for development, which could begin this spring.

New Conservancy Project Grants: Park Expansion; Native Plant Garden

The BHC Board of Directors approved a \$3 million grant for the Eastern Ridgeline project at Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area (KHSRA). This new 15-acre development, managed by L.A. County Parks, will provide additional group and family picnic areas for approximately 150 people, publicly accessible vista points, restrooms and parking. These long-awaited improvements will extend from the upper eastern ridgeline to the intersection of La Brea and Stocker. An improved pedestrian entrance at Don Lorenzo and La Brea is also planned.



Volunteers at work planting new Native Plant Garden at Kenneth Hahn Park.

The Board also authorized a \$31,000 grant for the Native Plant and Wildlife Garden Walk at KHSRA. A dedicated group of volunteers, interns and professionals is working to establish a corridor of native plants to showcase a vibrant ecosystem. The three-year project is being administered by the Baldwin Hills Park's community partner organization, Friends of Baldwin Hills, and has matching grants totalling \$10,000 from L.A. Audubon Society, and the L.A. and Santa Monica Mountains chapters of California Native Plant Society.

"This garden is a gift to park visitors from those of us that love native plants and wildlife. Additionally, the education programs provided by the Conservancy and its partners will give visitors a chance to appreciate the plants and animals of the area," said Garry George, project manager.

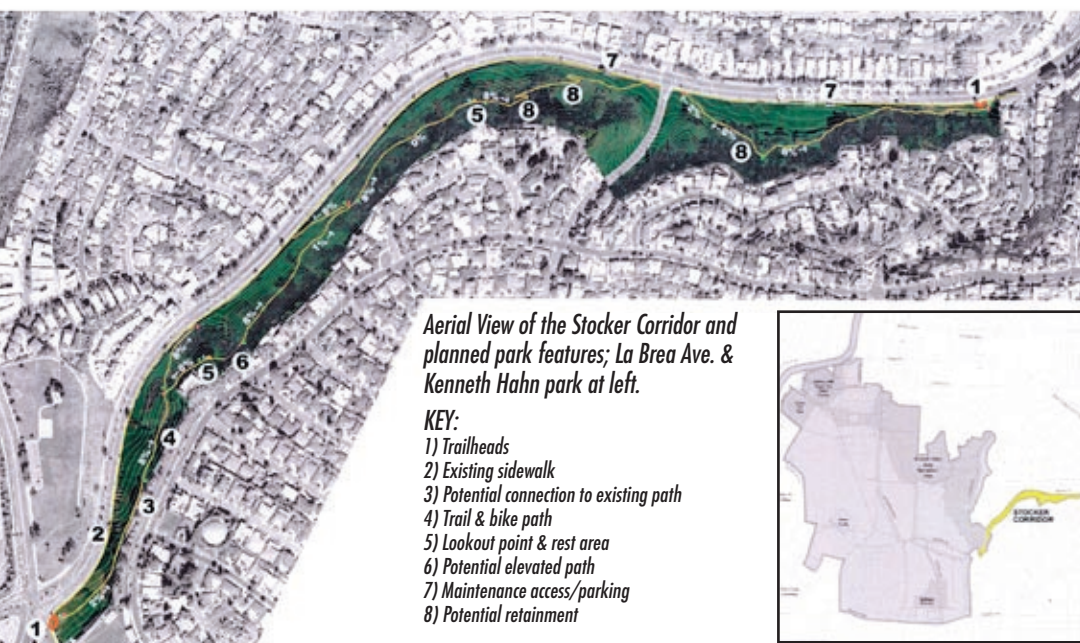


Newsletter of The Baldwin Hills Conservancy
A Partnership of Communities, State and Local Agencies

Spring 2005



The Baldwin Hills Park Master Plan, with La Cienega Blvd. at center, covered by new land bridge unifying both sides of the Park.



What's Happening?

- The Baldwin Hills Conservancy meets at the Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area Community Room on Fridays at 10:00 a.m.

Evening meetings are held on Thursdays at varying community locations. Get updates, other useful info (including downloadable PDFs of maps and PANORAMA) from our website, www.bhc.ca.gov, or call the Conservancy office at 310 558-5593.

2005 Upcoming Meeting Dates are: April 8, May 12 (evening meeting), June 24, August 5, September 16, October 27 (evening meeting), December 9.

- Join the Audubon Society on a community bird walk, every 3rd Saturday at 8:00am. Meet at Olympic Forest in Kenneth Hahn Park. For more info visit www.laaudubon.org.

- Be part of building a great park — Join the Friends of Baldwin Hills! Learn more at www.fotbh.org.

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State of California
Resources Agency
Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor

Newly Elected Officers Take Helm of Conservancy Governing Board

January 7, 2005 marked the beginning of leadership under the new Chairman and Vice Chairman, Allan Boodnick and Reginald Jones-Sawyer, respectively. The two officers will preside over the three-year old agency during the next twelve months as the BHC continues its mission to acquire and develop land in the Baldwin Hills for the expansion of Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area.



Your Baldwin Hills Conservancy Board: (L-R): Ron Schafer (State Parks), Paul Mount (State Lands Commission), Robert Jones (Governor Appointee), Reginald Jones-Sawyer (Governor Appointee), Marta Zaragoza (Governor Appointee), Allan Boodnick (Speaker Appointee), Lyn Wallensak (County Parks), Ta Lecia Arbor (Senate Appointee), Mary Ann Greene (Governor Appointee), Don Rogers (Culver City Parks), Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke (L.A. County), John Saurenman (Attorney General). NOT PICTURED: Ruth Coleman (State Parks), Kenneth Bentley (Governor Appointee), Bobbie Parks (Governor Appointee), Secretary Michael Chrisman (Resources Agency), David Harper (State Finance), Greg Broughton (Governor Appointee), Joe Edmiston (Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy), Neal Fishman (Coastal Conservancy), Sara Amir (Cal EPA), Russ Guiney (County Parks).

Objectives under the new leadership include continued acquisition of land; increased community outreach via meetings, newsletters and other publicity; engaging legislators and policy makers to speak at BHC meetings; and expediting how meetings are conducted.

Over the past two years, the agency has committed over \$15 million of its Proposition 40 bond allocation to capital improvement projects within its territory, ranging from land acquisition to development of much needed park facilities. The board consists of 21 appointed members who volunteer their time and service to the agency. The Conservancy is staffed by David McNeill, Executive Officer and Gloria Dangerfield, Executive Secretary.



BHC Executive Officer David McNeill presents new board members at installation event at Kenneth Hahn Park.

State-of-the-Art Facilities Slated for Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook

California State Parks has moved to the next stage in the development process, selecting the architectural team of Safdie Rabines and WRT to complete design development for the construction of an 11,000 square foot facility nestled within the upper reaches of the 68 acre park. The two-year design effort to determine the best possible facilities for the Scenic Overlook site was an impressive collaboration between the public, architectural team, state and local agencies.



Architect renderings of the proposed Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook facility.



The development will include a visitor's center, interpretive media theater, multipurpose room, outdoor observation plazas and

acres of meandering trails — all surrounded by native plants and small groves of toyon, sycamore and oak trees. An ambitious schedule has been proposed to meet the goal of a ground-breaking ceremony in 2006. As a part of the BHC's interpretation initiative, we have partnered with State Parks and the surrounding school districts to develop curriculum-based onsite activities that reflect the biology and cultural history of the park's native habitat and cultural resources.

Conservancy acquisition of a portion of the City of Los Angeles property below the site along Jefferson Blvd. is still pending action from the Bureau of Sanitation. This will be an important addition to the park, providing crucial public access to the Scenic Overlook.

Did You Know?

In 1843, the Spanish Government created a 3667 acre land grant identified as Rancho Cienega o Paso de la Tijera. This land extends from current day Leimert Park all the way to Culver City. Back then, the cienegas, or swamps, covered most of the lowlands surrounding the hills, which ascended nearly 500 feet above the basin's flood plain, escaping the erratic course of the L.A. River feeding into Ballona Creek. Two narrow valleys crossed the hills, like a pair of open scissors. This gave the area its second name, Paso de la Tijera, or step of the scissors.

The entire territory, comprised of marshes, natural springs, hills, streams and farmland, was purchased by E.J. Baldwin in 1875 and became known as the Baldwin Hills. Today, nearly half of the open space in the Baldwin Hills has been protected for park use. The remaining land is in active oil production managed by Plains Exploration and Production Co.



by Allan Boodnick

The Chair's Corner

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2005! We have exciting plans for this year, primarily to acquire more land as we work toward our goal of building a world-class park. Other plans include strengthening the collaboration of cities and organizations within the boundaries of the park (more on that below), more publicity about our progress, increased ad hoc committee involvement, board and staff development programs to make us more effective, and inviting legislators and policy makers to exchange ideas on issues affecting your expanding park.

The BHC was created in 2000 by legislation authored by Senator Kevin Murray and Speaker Emeritus Herb Wesson. Local communities, the County, the State and businesses are represented within the board's membership. Our members are grateful to all who spoke out on the Conservancy's behalf to denounce the California Performance Review's recommendation to eliminate the BHC. Thanks to your efforts, the Governor has withdrawn the controversial proposal, and we can continue our mission.

The unprecedented commitment to the Baldwin Hills Park Master Plan has been nurtured by community organizations through planning workshops and public meetings held over the past five years. Working with our local partners in Baldwin Hills, Baldwin Village, Baldwin Vista, Blair Hills, Culver City, Culver Crest, Fox Hills, Hyde Park, Inglewood, Ladera Heights, Leimert Park, View Park, Village Green, and Windsor Hills, the park vision has provided potent synergy, unifying these communities for the benefit of all.

The issue of collaboration, noted above, is an especially important goal. In public forums over the past few years, Culver City has attempted to withdraw from the Conservancy, thereby weakening the alliance that has been established. Their action has taken the form of giving disingenuous information, which implies the BHC is not acting within the provisions of the state-mandated Brown Act. We regularly consult with the Attorney General's Office to ensure compliance with the law.

Those speaking for the city also have stated their intent is to insure local control of private land use within their borders. Local control is not threatened by the existence of the Conservancy because the Conservancy is not a regulatory agency and by law does not have any jurisdiction over any private land in or outside of its territory.

None of us on the Board or in its alliances want Culver City to withdraw — our strength and success are in our unity. Everyone, including the residents of Culver City, must remain knowledgeable and seek out the true facts.

To that end, the public is invited to all Board meetings (see *What's Happening* for schedule), and the office is open five days a week for your questions and suggestions.

Please continue to help turn the dream we all share into reality. We look forward to a great and successful year — together!

Allan Boodnick was appointed to the Board as the representative for Ladera Heights by the Speaker of the California Assembly in October of 2002. He was first elected to the Vice Chair post in 2004 and Chaired the Staff Development, Personnel, and Nominations Ad Hoc Committees. Allan's experience on boards and committees includes two terms as Chair of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Community Advisory Committee for Marina del Rey, Ladera Heights, Windsor Hills and View Park; Vice President of the Ladera Heights Civic Association Board for eight years; and board member of the EIDC (the county and city agency that issues filming permits). He also served as a member of the L. A. County Airport Commission.